



pRide



WINTER 1998

THE NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR

RHODE ISLAND STATE EMPLOYEES

Employee Benefit Issues

Deferred Compensation Plan (Section 457)

As you may have read previously the annual deferral limit in 1998 has been increased from \$7,500 to \$8,000. Participants who wish to defer the entire \$8,000 should divide the number of paydays remaining in 1998 from the pay period in which you wish to increase your deduction.

Also, employees who are currently deferring more than \$307 per pay period (\$8,000 annually) should reevaluate their deferral goals for the year since the annual maximum will be met before year end. A more even flow of deferral amounts should be calculated. Contact your plan provider for changes requested in deferral amounts.

Fidelity participants are reminded to make sure that they select an investment group, otherwise, funds will be placed in a general account. Also of news to the Fidelity participants is the reduction of the account fee, effective January 1, 1998, from \$98.00 to \$48.00 per year.

Flexible Benefits Plan Rules Revisited

The state's Flexible Benefits Plan, or Cafeteria Plan, includes the Short Term Disability Plan, Cancer Plan, Dependent Day Care, and Classic Blue and Harvard Pilgrim PPO premiums. These plans are offered on a pretax basis under Internal Revenue Codes. These codes do not allow any change in benefits, including stopping deductions, during the plan year (calendar) unless there is a change in family status. Changes can only be made during the fall open enrollment. Change in family status includes termination, layoff or loss of coverage under a spouse's plan. Application forms are available from the Office of State Employee Benefits if this situation arises (222-3160).

Group Health Continuation Under COBRA

Employees, Spouse and Dependents: Read carefully about continuation of health insurance benefits.

Legal Basis: A Federal Law — Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA) requires the State of Rhode Island to offer employees and their families the opportunity to pay for a temporary extension of health coverage called "continuation coverage," when their health care coverage terminates. COBRA became effective July 1, 1986. Coverage under COBRA is at a group rate for a period of time specified by law. Please refer to the chart below for details on COBRA eligibility. This notice summarizes your rights and obligations under COBRA.

Cause of Loss of Health Coverage	Who is Entitled to Purchase Coverage? (Qualifying Beneficiary)	Length of Continuation of Coverage
Termination or retirement of employee	employee & family	18 months
Reduction of Employee's work hours which causes cancellation of coverage	employee & family	29 months
Employee eligible for Medicare disability	employee, spouse, dependent child	29 months
*Death of employee, divorce, legal separation	spouse & child(ren)	26 months
Employee eligible for Medicare	spouse & child(ren)	36 months
*Child(ren) ceasing to be "dependent"	child(ren)	36 months
Bankruptcy	retiree, surviving spouse	lifetime
	spouse of retiree, dependent child(dren)	until retiree dies, plus 36 months

You do not have to show that you are insurable to choose continuing coverage. However, you will have to pay part of the premium, including a 2% administrative fee.

If you choose continuation coverage, the State of Rhode Island is required to allow you to purchase coverage which, as of the time coverage is being provided, is identical to the coverage provided under the plan to similarly situated employees or family members. Refer to the chart above.

When is Continuation Coverage Terminated?

Your continuation coverage will cease for any of the following reasons:

- 1) The State of Rhode Island no longer provides group health coverage for any of its employees.
- 2) You do not pay the premium for continuation coverage as agreed.
- 3) The covered employee or qualified beneficiary(ies) of COBRA elect coverage under another plan.
- 4) Employee is eligible for Medicare.
- 5) At the end of the eligibility period.

Who Can Answer My Questions?

Department of Administration Office of Personnel Administration, Employee Benefits, One Capitol Hill, Providence, Rhode Island 02908-5864. Telephone: (401) 222-3279

*To receive this extension, you must notify the State within 60 days of the occurrence of these events.



- 97-9** 8-8-97 Establishes the Governor's Council on Health.
- 97-10** 11-6-97 Continues Governor's Insurance Task Force.
- 97-11** 12-4-97 Continues Governor's Insurance Council.
- 97-12** 12-11-97 Increases membership in Inter-Agency Coordinating Council for Handicapped and Infant Toddler Programs.
- 97-13** 12-12-97 Creates a Blue Ribbon Task Force to Assess the Operation of the Greater Providence-Warwick Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

For more information or copies of Executive Orders, call the **Office of the Executive Counsel, 222-2080, Ext. 258.**

BITS 'N PIECES

Lee Grossi has retired from state service and was sent off from DCYF's Division of Management and Budget with an outstanding party at the State House, complete with gubernatorial and legislative citations. DCYF is fortunate to now

have **Peter B. Keenan**, CPA, as part of its management team. Peter has extensive experience in the fiscal arena that includes work in both the private and public sectors.

Everett Thornton, a Clinical Social Worker, has been elected to the Executive Board of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. In extending congratulations, DCYF Director **Jay G. Lindgren, Jr.** said, "We are proud to have you represent Rhode Island, and more particularly, this department, on the national scene. Your commitment to children and families is evident, and we are pleased that your fellow compact administrators recognize your leadership skills and abilities." Rhode Island will be the host state for the Interstate Compact's 1998 Annual Meeting.

The Woonsocket City Council has honored Senior Human Services Business Officer **Joseph Cahill** by naming a Woonsocket athletic field the **Joe Cahill Little League Field** in recognition of Joe's twenty-seven (27) years of service with the Woonsocket Little League.

OTD Training Courses

February	Fee	March	Fee
3/3-10 Intro to Windows 95	\$ 85	9 Managing Employee Performance	\$110
4/9 Intro to Word Perfect for Windows	110	16 Intro to Access (Version 7)	85
6/19 Intro to Microsoft EXCEL for Windows	110	16 Labor Relations Issues for Supervisors	40
9 Supervisory and Mngmt Skills	110	17 Making Effective Presentations	80
11 Building Positive Work Relationships	80	18 Intermediate Windows 95	85
17/ Intro to Microsoft Word (Version 7)	85	18 Gender Talk	35
March		23 Intro to Word Perfect 5.1 (DOS Version)	110
2 Keys to Clerical Success	89*	25 Desktop Publishing	110
4 Basic Spanish II	80	25 Getting a Grip on Your Money	20
		26 Intro to Personal Computers	40

* includes textbook — a valuable office reference.

For more information on these and other training courses, call the Office of Training and Development at **222-2877**. For hearing impaired **TDD 222-6144**.

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Deadline for contributions to the Spring issue is March 10, 1998.

The State of Rhode Island is an equal opportunity employer and reasonable accommodations will be provided. For assistance, call EEO Office at 222-3990. (TDD 222-6144).

pRIde in performance

The Rhode Island Library Association (RILA) has named **Dorothy Frechette** 1997 Librarian of the Year. Dorothy is the Deputy Director of Rhode Island's Office of Library and Information Services (formerly the Department of State Library Services). Well known for her determination, fairness and hardwork representing Rhode Island's library community and their patrons for over twenty five years, Dorothy was a popular choice for this year's award. She successfully met the challenge of funding cutbacks, new five-year plans, and several agency physical moves. In addition, she served as a guiding force for full state funding for CLAN, the Cooperating Libraries Automated Network. Because of these and many more outstanding accomplishments, the RILA chose to bestow its highest award on this dedicated librarian.

The award was presented to her by Barbara Weaver, Chief Information Officer, Office of Library and Information Services, DOA.

Anthony Mansolillo, a Caseworker Supervisor II, was selected by the Rhode Island Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers to receive the Chapter's 1997 Social Worker of the Year award in the field of Children and Families. The award was presented at the Chapter's Annual Dinner. The award is given each year to recognize the outstanding contributions social workers make to children and families.

Seven DCYF staff members were recently honored for their "professionalism and contribution to the agency and to children and families" at the first annual Exceptional Peer Awards Ceremony.

Cynthia Bacon has been with the Department for eight years. A Social Caseworker, she is said to have a remarkable knack for handling her cases. She is dedicated to the agency and to her caseload, and tireless in her quest to protect children. A team player, she goes above and beyond to help coworkers, without being asked. **Frank Murphy**, a Juvenile Program Worker, has been working at the RI Training School for seventeen years. He is credited with an excellent work record, and for working exceptionally well with his peers as well as with the youth in his charge. **Margaret (Peg) Dolan**, a Public Health Nurse, has been with the department for twenty-one years. She is known as a dedicated employee, always willing and available to help. She has great respect for others and is known for her compassion for staff as well as children and families.

She is an advocate for troubled families, always available to ensure that children in care secure good quality medical care. **Dorothy (Dot) Hultine**, a Senior Administrative Officer, has been with the Department for over sixteen years beginning as a social caseworker, moving up to program planner before becoming Senior Administrative Officer in 1991. She is known for her high level of commitment and professionalism in dealing with staff, clients, elected officials and the public. **Adele Koluch** has been with the department for ten years as a Personnel Aide. She is credited with demonstrating great patience in dealing with new and current employees, and assisting employees in many ways, even at the busiest times. **Maria Corsini Buttes** and **Jean Rose** were honored for their work as Information and Referral Specialists who operate the department's record center. They are the workers behind the scenes that support line staff by providing valuable information in a timely, courteous and professional manner. Each of them has been with the department for over eleven years.

The awards ceremony was chaired by Social Casework Supervisor **Mark Lyman**, Chairman of the Exceptional Peer Award Committee. The creation of this committee and the bestowing of awards is part of an overall Continuous Quality Improvement Program undertaken within the department to improve both operations and morale. In presenting the awards, DCYF Director **Jay G. Lindgren, Jr.** offered congratulations to the recipients and to all who were nominated by their peers. Nominations were solicited from the 850 department employees. Final selection of honorees was made by the Exceptional Peer Award Committee, made up of representatives from the various department functional units.

They are **Michael Kane**, **Robert Hayes**, **Gail Parente**, Director, **Jay G. Lindgren, Jr.**, **Lisa Kolek**, **Sandy Woods**, **Peg Dolan**, **Mark Lyman**, **Nancy Harrington**, **Tom Tedeschi**, **Eileen Eckloff** and **Ken Reiss**.

Three state agencies were recognized for their contributions to health and safety in the workplace at the 4th Annual Seminar of the Health and Safety in State Agencies Task Force. Each year the Task Force recognizes those agencies who meet or exceed outstanding safety programs. This year the awards went to the Department of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals' **Eleanor Slater Hospital**, accepted by **Ronald Provencal**; the Department of Administration, accepted by **Joseph Cardillo**; and the RI Higher Education Assistance

(Continued on page 4)



Dr. Robert Carothers, was interviewed by several national media outlets, including CNN, NPR, and the *Today Show*,

on the topic of alcohol use on college campuses. In the aftermath of the death from alcohol poisoning of a 20-year old freshman at MIT, President Carothers was asked by the *Today Show* to discuss the University of Rhode Island's strict alcohol policy. Interviewed in the New York studio, the President fielded questions from co-host Katie Couric. He emphasized that the University's policy of prohibiting alcohol at all University-wide events and instituting more aggressive fine and enforcement initiative is designed to send a clear message to students about the institution's values and expectations.

November was a very exciting time for URI. Director Michael Corrente (*American Buffalo* and *Federal Hill*) chose URI as the backdrop for his third movie, *Outside Providence*. Students, faculty, staff, and other members of the community were given the opportunity to be extras in the movie. *Outside Providence*, set in Pawtucket, RI circa 1974, is the film adaptation of the Peter Farrelly novel of the same name. Script co-writers with Corrente are Peter and Bobby Farrelly (authors of *Kingpin* and *Dumb and Dumber*). The URI campus will be seen in the film as a fictitious Rhode Island prep school called "Cornwall Academy". Gary Huckabay, one of the film's assistant directors, said that Corrente used the URI campus as a backdrop for the movie because "the school has a [1970s] period flavor...". The movie is about a small-town teenager named Tim Dunphy, played by Sean Hatossy (*In and Out* and *The Postman*), whose father (Alec Baldwin) sends him away to Cornwall for his senior year in an attempt to separate him from his rambunctious friends and small-town thinking. Other stars in the movie included: Sarah Gilbert (*Roseanne*), Jonathan Brandis (*Sea Quest*, *Ladybugs*), and George Wendt ("*Norm*" from *Cheers*). The film is expected to be in theaters sometime next year.

Ten alumni were recently inducted into the University's Engineering Hall of Fame. Honored for the extraordinary success achieved in their careers were: Robert C. Ayotte '59; the late David Beretta, Jr. '49; Charles M. Billmyer '50; John E. Chiaverini '47; the late John E. Gray '43; Jim Hubbard '49; the late Chester H. Kirk '40; the late Alfred Marzocchi '41; Simon Ostrach '44 & '49; and Nelson C. White '25.

URI has entered into a partnership agreement with the Donald Wyatt Detention Facility in Central Falls. This partnership will provide important clinical training opportunities for both URI students and faculty, and will provide educational and research support to the Facility.

pRide in performance

Continued from page 3

Authority, accepted by **Carol Antonizio**. The **Department of Administration** received a **second** award for having the most improved safety program.

Indoor air quality, emergency evacuation, and management commitment to safety issues were the topics of discussion at the 4th Annual Seminar. Representatives from twenty-three state agencies attended the event held at the Eleanor Slater Hospital in Cranston. Keynote speakers included **Marie Stoeckel**, Department of Health, **Anthony Marsella**, State Fire Marshal's office, and **Dante Boffi**, Department of Administration. **Dr. Lee H. Arnold**, Director of the Department of Labor and Training gave opening remarks, and **E. Jean Severance** provided an overview of the accomplishments and goals of the Task Force credited in 1993.

The Task Force works to establish and maintain effective and comprehensive occupational safety and health programs in State agencies. Task Force Chairperson, **E. Jean Severance**, observed that, "The need for safe work places is so obvious that it gets taken for granted. A proactive approach can help prevent accidents from occurring, thus saving taxpayers thousands of dollars," said Severance.

STATE EMPLOYEES ART EXHIBIT

Call for Artwork

BE A PART OF "THE ART OF THE STATE"!

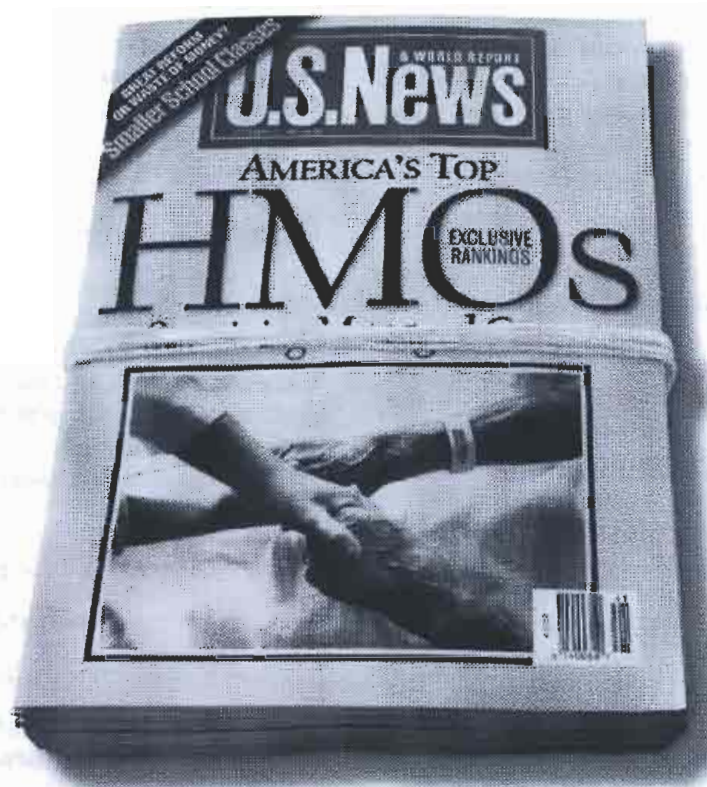
The first statewide exhibition of art by State of Rhode Island Employees is currently being organized for the Atrium Gallery at One Capitol Hill in the lobby of the State Administration Building.

The exhibit will run for two months, March through April, 1998. If you are an active or retired state employee artist you are invited to submit your work. The deadline for submissions is February 25th. Art must be original and is limited to two-dimensional works, such as drawings, etchings, etc.

To date, the Atrium Gallery has hosted exhibits by the Providence Art Club, Wickford Art Association, the Donovan Gallery, Very Special Arts of RI, and South County Center for the Arts. Special lighting and display walls were installed in the lobby of the State Administration Building to be able to effectively display art, and the exhibits have been enthusiastically received by employees and visitors.

If you are interested in participating, please contact **Al Pointe**, Statewide Planning, RI Department of Administration, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908 (222-2857), right away.

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